

ARTISTS

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## Artist Winds Up in Court

By MORAG MACLACHLAN

Jane Flavell-Collins won't forget her first day in court. She walked in hampered down by all of her art supplies. Just wanting to blend into the scene, she frantically scanned the room for a seat.

Collins spotted an empty chair at the front of the room right in front of the judge. She dragged her supplies over and began setting up. Before she knew it, an officer was asking her to move.

continued on page 4



Collins gained national attention for her drawings of the shoe bomber Richard Reid.

continued from page one

"I was sitting in the defendant's seat," Collins said. "I was so embarrassed, but I thought nothing could be that bad again."

She was right. Collins' career as a courtroom artist has flourished since her rocky start back in 1978. The Depot Street resident's pastel drawings have appeared on Channel 5, CBS 4 and FOX 25. She gained national attention for her work on shoe bomber Richard Reid's trial.

"That's the most important trial I've ever done," she said.

Collins' drawings of Reid were not only broadcast on the Boston television stations, but also appeared in papers in Maine and New York. Her pictures were also incorporated into a Canadian documentary on the case. She said she usually listens to the trial developments as she draws. But when U.S. District Judge William Young addressed Reid, Collins couldn't help but put down her pastels.

"He was brilliant dealing with Reid," she said. "He told him that he was not a soldier, but a terrorist."

Except for this short break from drawing, Collins usually never stops drawing once she's in the room. That's because time is of the essence. She said sometimes she gets a whole day to draw the scene, but sometimes it's a matter of minutes. When it's that quick, she'll just use a pastel to mark an area with the right color and then fill in the details later.

"It's hard to color quickly



**Collins has worked for WCVB-TV, FOX 25 and CBS 4 capturing courtroom scenes since 1978.**

enough. I go for the details because you only have minutes. I go for the attitude, the expressions."

The courtroom has changed over the years. After the shoe bomber case, everyone entering the courtroom had to show two forms of identification and take off their shoes for a quick check.

Camera in the courtroom

Nobody can come back and ask you to change a certain detail."

Collins earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the Massachusetts College of Art. She then went on to obtain her master's in Italy. She's lived in Duxbury since 1976.

Artistic talent runs in her family. Coincidentally, her

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**-Jane Flavell-Collins**

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laws have changed as well. Collins used to cover both state and federal cases. But now cameras are allowed in state court proceedings. Still, Collins says she enjoys courtroom work more than sketching commissioned portraits.

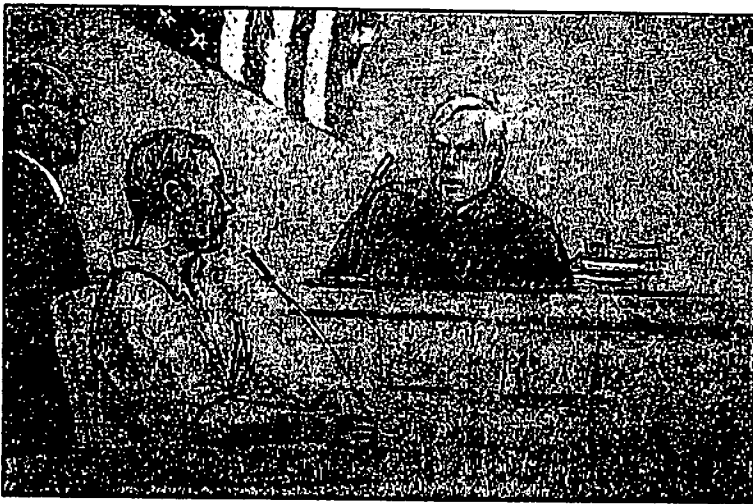
"There's less pressure when you're drawing the courtroom," she said. "There's only a limited amount of time to get the job done and then it's over.

sister Constance Flavell Pratt of Norwell is also a court artist. The two sat side by side during the Reid trial, each working for different stations.

Collins says she charges a flat day rate to the stations regardless of whether the drawing takes her five minutes or eight hours. Her current case is that of Bradford Bleidt, the owner of a financial radio station in Boston who allegedly bilked people out of nearly \$27 million.



**Collins' pastel interpretation of the Richard Reid trial in Boston was broadcast around the world.**



**Collins most recent case is that of Bostonian Bradford Bleidt charged with bilking residents out of millions of dollars.**